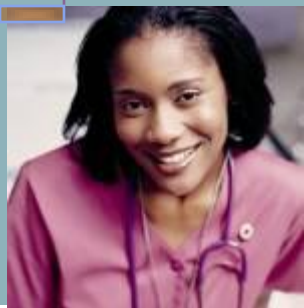




**Kentucky Adult Learner Initiative  
Working Group on Flexible Program Delivery  
August 25, 2008**



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CAEL



**CAEL**

The Council for Adult & Experiential Learning



# CAEL's Mission

**CAEL works to expand lifelong learning opportunities for adults.**

**CAEL pioneers learning strategies for adult learners in partnership with community colleges and universities, employers, labor organizations and government.**

# Adult Learning in Focus

National and State-by-State Data



2008

CAEL in partnership with NCHEMS



# Adult Learning in Focus

- At current levels of performance, nine states are ‘on track’ to meet the competitive benchmark of 55% of adults with college degrees
- 9 more states could meet the benchmark if they improved performance to match the best-performing states.

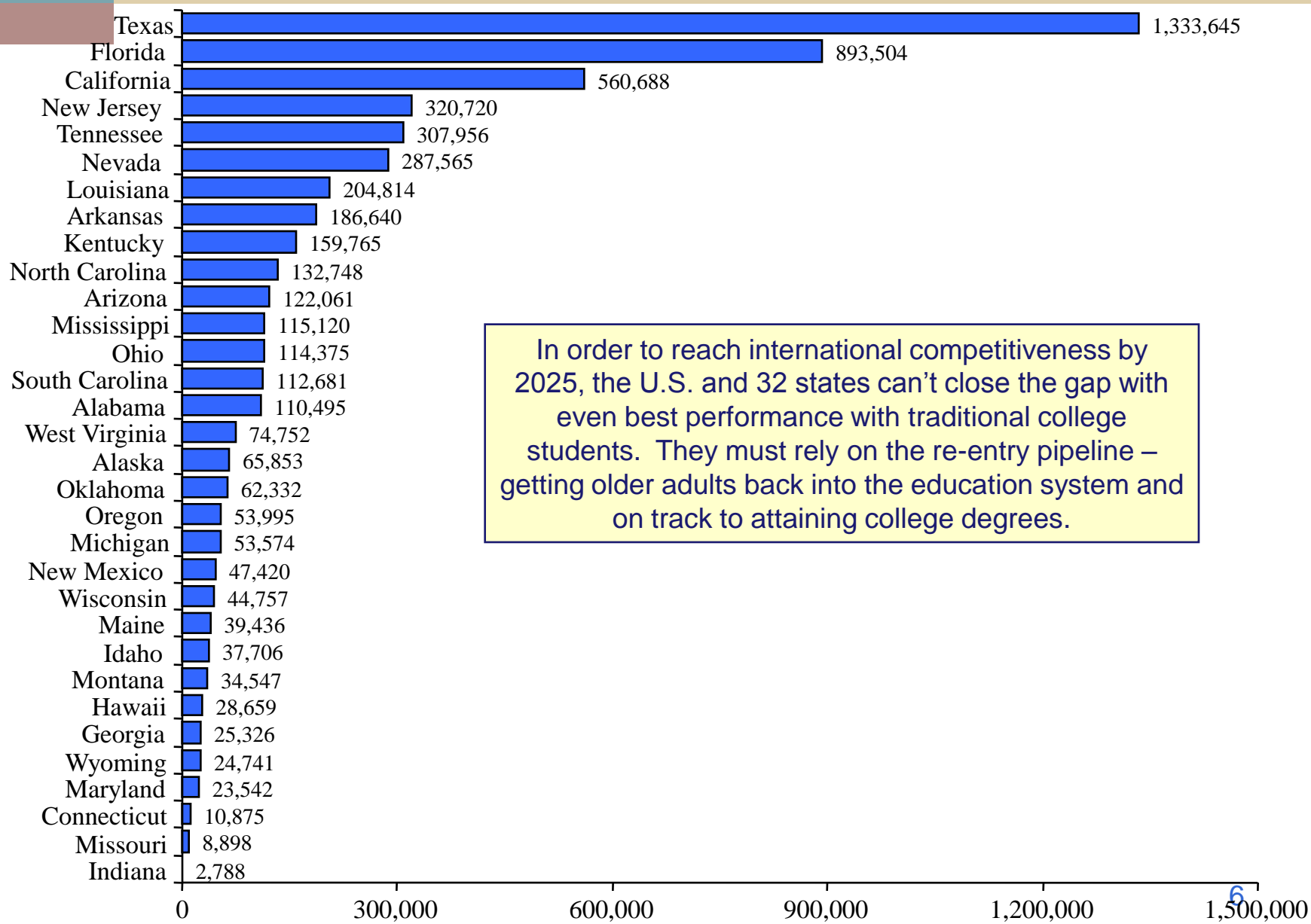


# Adult Learning in Focus

- 32 states cannot catch up to the educational attainment levels of the best performing countries internationally by relying solely on strategies related to traditional-age students—even if students in those states graduate from high school at the rate of the best performing state, even if high school students enter college at the rate of the best performing state, even if these students graduate from college at the level of the best performing state, and even if educated immigrants continue to enter the U.S. at the levels of the recent past.



## Even Best Performance with Traditional College-Aged Students at Each Stage of the Educational Pipeline Will Leave Gaps in More than 30 States



In order to reach international competitiveness by 2025, the U.S. and 32 states can't close the gap with even best performance with traditional college students. They must rely on the re-entry pipeline – getting older adults back into the education system and on track to attaining college degrees.



# The Adult Learner

## A General Definition

**An adult learner is “an employee who studies.”**



# Adult Learner Barriers

## ■ Institutional

- Policies and practices that impede and discourage adult learners

## ■ Situational

- Adult learner's life situation or circumstances

## ■ Dispositional

- Adult learner's personal concerns, beliefs, or attitudes





# Another Way to Look at Barriers

## *From Adult Learning in Focus: National and State-by-State Data*

### **Access, Affordability, and Aspiration**

- **Time and Place Barriers**
- Cost and Ability to Pay
- Levels of Preparation for Participation & Success
- Relevance
- Information



# Serving Adult Learners

## Main Factors Influencing Adult's Decision to Enroll in Higher Education

- Convenient time and place for classes
- Flexible pacing for completing program
- Ability to transfer credits
- Reputation of institution
- Requirement for current or future job



# Serving Adult Learners

## Factors Influencing Decision to Enroll (cont'd.)

- Credit for learning gained from life/work experiences
- **Availability of online courses**
- Availability of financial assistance
- Tuition assistance from employer
- Availability of child care



# Outreach to Adult Learners

- Postsecondary institutions are increasingly offering more flexible schedules, such as weekend-only classes, accelerated vacation programs, on-line instruction, and critical support services during non-traditional hours.

*From Adult Learners in Higher Education: Barriers to Success and Strategies to Improve Results.* U.S. Department of Labor. March 2007



# Outreach to Adult Learners

- Some institutions offer multiple entry, exit, and reentry points, including more frequent start times throughout the year.
- An area with great promise is the shortening and modularizing of curricula and the offering of interim credentials linked to career advancement.

*From Adult Learners in Higher Education: Barriers to Success and Strategies to Improve Results.* U.S. Department of Labor. March 2007



# Outreach to Adult Learners

- New partnerships with employers are helping to integrate job-related content and teach what students need to advance in their careers.
- Many individual institutions are creating systems that make it easier to move between non-credit and credit courses and programs.

*From Adult Learners in Higher Education: Barriers to Success and Strategies to Improve Results.* U.S. Department of Labor. March 2007



# Outreach to Adult Learners

- Articulation agreements between institutions help students know in advance which courses will receive credit at their new school; statewide agreements can help smooth turf battles.

*From Adult Learners in Higher Education: Barriers to Success and Strategies to Improve Results.* U.S. Department of Labor. March 2007



# Flexible Scheduling Options

- Classes that meet one night a week instead of two or three
- Classes that meet on weekends only
- Accelerated program options that enable adult learners to squeeze learning into available chunks of time
- Courses and curriculum formats that are fully or partially self-paced

*From Adult Learners in Higher Education: Barriers to Success and Strategies to Improve Results.* U.S. Department of Labor. March 2007





# Flexible Scheduling Options

- Courses and curriculum formats that are fully or partially self-paced
- Distance learning and on-line options that do not require a physical presence of all students in the same place
- Critical support services such as career counseling, library services, and administrative functions at non-traditional times.

*From Adult Learners in Higher Education: Barriers to Success and Strategies to Improve Results.* U.S. Department of Labor. March 2007



# CAEL's ALFI Project

## CAEL's Principles of Effectiveness for Serving Adult Learners

1. Outreach
2. Life & Career Planning
3. Financing
4. Assessment of Learning Outcomes
5. Teaching-Learning Process
6. Student Support Systems
7. Technology
8. Strategic Partnerships



# ALFI Principle #1

## ALFI Principle #1

- Outreach
  - The institution conducts its outreach to adult learners by overcoming barriers in time, place, and tradition in order to create lifelong access to educational opportunities.



# ALFI Principle #2

## ALFI Principle #2

### Life and Career Planning

- The institution addresses adult learners' life and career goals before or at the onset of enrollment in order to assess and align its capacities to help learners reach their goals.



# ALFI Principle #3

## ALFI Principle #3

- Financing
  - The institution promotes choice using an array of payment options for adult learners in order to expand equity and financial flexibility.



# ALFI Principle #4

## ALFI Principle #4

- Assessment of Learning Outcomes
  - The institution defines and assesses the knowledge, skills, and competencies acquired by adult learners both from the curriculum and from life/work experience in order to assign credit and confer degrees with rigor.



# ALFI Principle #5

## ALFI Principle #5

- Teaching/Learning Process
  - The institution's faculty use multiple methods of instruction (including experiential and problem-based methods) for adult learners in order to connect curricular concepts to useful knowledge and skills.



# ALFI Principle #6

## ALFI Principle #6

- Student Support Systems
  - The institution assists adult learners using comprehensive academic and student support systems in order to enhance students' capacities to become self-directed, lifelong learners.





# ALFI Principle #7

## ALFI Principle #7

- Technology
  - The institution uses information technology to provide relevant and timely information and to enhance the learning experience.



# ALFI Principle #8

## ALFI Principle #8

- Strategic Partnerships
  - The institution engages in strategic relationships, partnerships, and collaborations with employers and other organizations in order to develop and improve educational opportunities for adult learners.



# ALFI Principle #9

## ALFI Principle #9

- Transitions
  - The institution supports guided pathways leading into and from its programs and services in order to assure that students' learning will apply to successful achievement of their educational and career goals.



# The Nine Principles

## The Principles of Effectiveness are:

- Integrated – they work together
- Indivisible – they form a whole
- Imperative – not just “a good idea”